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LETTER DATED 17 NOVEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 16 November 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning United States pronouncements urging the maintenance of the sanctions imposed by the Security Council on Iraq as long as the national regime in Iraq remains in place, calling attention to the United States military preparations for aggression against Iraq and urging you to meet your responsibilities with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security in this region of the world.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 16 November 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to draw your attention to the decision of United States President Bill Clinton, as announced to reporters at the White House on Friday, 14 November 1997, to send the aircraft carrier George Washington to the Gulf region as part of the United States military preparations for renewed military aggression against Iraq. I should also like to refer to the report from Agence France-Presse in Washington on the same day that President Clinton had once again stated that the sanctions imposed on Iraq would remain in place as long as President Saddam Hussein was in power.

The frantic campaign being waged by the United States and the United Kingdom once again confirms that the United States of America is endeavouring to act against the will of the international community in the context of its pursuit of a policy of exercising hegemony over the Security Council, the United Nations and the world as a whole. During the consultations and at the formal meeting held by the Security Council on 12 November 1997, many of the Council's members, and three of its permanent members in particular, namely the Russian Federation, China and France, expressed outright rejection of threats to resort to military aggression against Iraq. Diplomatic efforts are under way within the Security Council with a view to resolving the ongoing crisis between Iraq and the Special Commission.

In addition to the statements made on the matter by a significant number of representatives of States members of the Council, many States in the region and elsewhere have expressed absolute rejection of the threats made by the United States to launch military aggression against Iraq.

The President of the United States, then, continues to assert that the sanctions imposed on Iraq will be maintained as long as the national regime in Iraq remains in place. This confirms the fact that Iraq's complaints with respect to United States policy towards it, as exemplified by its requiring the unjust embargo against Iraq to be maintained despite its compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, are just, true and well-founded.

The only conclusion to be drawn from the statements of the United States President is that the sanctions imposed on Iraq were designed from the outset and have been maintained thus far in order to achieve that objective of the United States and not for purposes of so-called compliance by Iraq with the Security Council resolutions relating to the destruction of prohibited weapons and equipment. Iraqi officials have done everything in their power to alert the members of the Security Council and the international community to this fact, and I think Mr. Tariq Aziz, at his meeting with you during his recent visit to New York, made clear to you the illegality and unlawfulness of the position taken by the United States and the fact that it bears no relation to the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The irresponsible actions of the United States constitute open defiance and a grave violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the Security Council resolutions themselves, which constantly affirm respect for Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. Iraq condemns in the strongest terms these actions targeting a founding member of the United Nations, and it urges you to intervene personally with the Government of the United States of America with a view to its halting its frantic military campaign. It further calls upon you to meet in full your responsibility under the Charter to make every endeavour to maintain international peace and security in this important region of the world.

I request you to have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said Al-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs of
the Republic of Iraq